

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 4527

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TPHY, HK, TW

SUBJECT: ROC REQUEST FOR PRATAS WEATHER STATION ASSISTANCE

REF: TAIPEI 2389

1. REQUEST DEPARTMENT CHECK WITH MR. VAUGHN D. ROCKNEY OF NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA) CONCERNING STATUS OF HIS EFFORTS TO WORK OUT AGREEMENT FOR ROC CENTRAL WEATHER BUREAU (CWB) TO BUY EXPENDIBLES FROM NOAA FOR BALLOON LAUNCHES FOR CHINESE NAVY (CN) OPERATED, U.S.-SUPPLIED PRATAS ISLAND RAWINSONDE WEATHER STATION. CN DOWN TO ONE LAUCH PER DAY AND WILL BE FORCED TO CEASE BALLOON LAUNCHES IF UNABLE TO OBTAIN EXPENDIBLES. ROCKNEY SAYS PRATAS DATA HAS BEEN PROMPT AND EXCELLENT FOR: A) TYPHOON FORECASTING, B) COMPUTER BOOKING RE MIN/ MAX TAILWIND/HEADWIND FOR MILITARY/COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS IN AREA, C) 500-MILLEBAR WEATHER FORECASTING BY US NAVY AND D) FOR WEATHER DATA FOR US SEVENTH FLEET. ISOLATED ISLAND LOCATION AND CAPABILITY MODEN PASSIVE RDF EQUIPMENT AT SITE TO TRACK BALLOONS WITHIN 6 DEGREES OF HORIZON MAKES SITE DATA SUPERIOR TO DATAHEROM HONG KONG, TAIWAN AND MAINLAND SITES IN THE AREA.

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2. BECAUSE OF PC ADMISSION TO WMO, NOAA FELT ITSELF FORCED TO CURTAIL ONGOING ASSISTANCE TO CWB FOR SITE IN SEPT 73 FORCING CWB TO ATTEMPT PURCHASE EXPENDIBLES FROM US SUPPLIERS. HOWEVER, CWB HAS EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS FINDING DEPENDABLE SUPPLIERS DUE US MATERIAL SHORTAGES. CN HAS BUDGETED FOR 100 PERCENT OF EXPENDIBLES FOR AVERAGE TWO DAILY LAUNCHES, AND WISHES NOAA WORK OUT SIMPLE BILATERAL AGREEMENT IN WHICH CWB WOULD GIVE NOAA US\$40,000 IN RETURN FOR GUARANTEED, ONE-SOURCE, ANNUAL SUPPLY OF NOAA-INSPECTED EXPENDIBLES. ROCKNEY STATES US HAS SIMILAR AGREEMENT WITH MAY OTHER NATIONS, INCLUDING MOST LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

3. PLEASE ALSO QUERY ROCKNEY RE POSSIBILITY HE SUGGESTED DURING APRIL 1974 TAIPEI VISIT THAT NOAA MIGHT BE ABLE TO RE-OPEN BOOKS FOR TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO ALLOW SITE TO CONTINUE OPERATION UNTIL NORMAL SUPPLY PIPELINE STARTS FLOWING. CN HAS BORROWED SOME EXPENDIBLES LOCALLY TO KEEP LAUNCHES GOING DURING TYPHOON SEASON, BUT UNABLE TO BORROW MORE AND MAY BE FORCED SUSPEND LAUNCHES IN AUGUST.
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